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## CURRENT OPINION

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### **The League of Nations**

A signed article in the *New Republic* of May 25 from H. N. Brailsford sets the proposed League of Nations in a new light. The writer argues that the discussion has been too much confined to Englishmen and Americans. There is danger that when our scheme is produced it will be rejected by European powers. Their outlook is different. The risk of invasion colors their whole attitude toward war; it is only a dim possibility for America or England. In the second place America and Britain are satisfied powers while the European nations feel the need of changed conditions.

Continental powers will be intensely interested in the question of security and risk. America may safely gamble on the success of the league. But suppose states remain outside the federation or secede from it. Would the league be a security for France with Germany outside? Would all the league nations at once attack the seceder? For example, would it be a simple matter to have Austria join Italy to coerce Germany? Or England join Germany to coerce France? Would Holland declare war on Germany if she should offend? The risk is too unequal. Devastation may overtake these powers before the forces of the league could arrive.

The league will have to be based on an elastic pledge. It might be enough to agree not to help a nation which enters upon war without conference and to defend it if attacked. This would always leave the offender isolated.

The bias of American and English thought shows again in the matter of the enforcement of the recommendations of the league. How will the intolerable situations which make war be removed? Dissatisfied, growing states must have a changed world. To pledge the nations

to enforce awards to satisfy these states might destroy the league. To refuse to grant the awards would mean that these restless states would seek their real life outside the league. The whole matter of sanctions and enforcement is so difficult that it seems inevitable that some basis must be found which will evoke the spontaneous loyalty of nations. Armed force, the boycott, trade war must certainly end in failure—the world does not want a league which will stand over it like a criminal law. It must be based on such a commercial arrangement that great advantages flow from membership so that no nation could afford to remain outside or to step outside. “A charter of positive benefits would act as a continual cement to the league creating a mutual interdependence of interests so close that the league would figure in the daily life of every trading people as a persuasive benefactor.” Free trade, open colonies, open door for capital in non-exploited lands, and no monopoly of raw materials must be elements of the league agreement.

### **Catholics and the League of Nations**

Catholic opinion in regard to the League of Nations is concisely presented in the April 15 number of *Les Nouvelles religieuses*. They who plan the future league forget two great facts: (1) that the Catholic church realized in the realm of international organization the most powerful and efficient world-society the human race has seen; (2) the Roman papacy was the center from which the lines of peace and concord ran out to all the nations. In the Middle Ages Europe was really a social and organic unity with a common spirit in all its parts. Wars were still possible but the “peace of God,” the “truce of God,” the use of excommunication, the ban, and

temporal sanctions gave the pope power to hold in check many potential wars. It would be difficult to conceive a more perfect League of Nations than that of the Catholic church in the Middle Ages.

It seems like an impossible task to reconstruct this masterpiece in the modern world torn by its moral, political, and economic differences. Catholic thinkers reject the idealistic dream of internationalism and in its place urge the Catholic supernaturalism. An international organization crowned by the moral influence of the Roman church would be ideal. To give to laws and findings of such international tribunals as that of the Hague the necessary prestige to make them efficient the influence of the papacy is absolutely essential. The pope has millions of subjects in every nation of the world. He is not entangled in alliances or political and economic combinations. He should be to the nations the august mediator of the peace of God. Let the Holy See share in the future world-affairs as a sovereign power and the findings will be laid authoritatively upon the conscience of the world. Other churches and non-Christian groups will follow the attitude adopted by the pope of Rome; so the new code of the law of nations will be established. "Has contemporary society so much moral and social strength working for order, justice, love, and loyal reverence for all that is right that it can with a light heart neglect the powerful help of the Roman pontiff?"

### **The Worthy Victory**

A clear statement of the dangers which wait in the path of the League to Enforce Peace is given in an editorial of the *New Republic* for May 25. The advocates of the league insisted at the meeting at Philadelphia in the second week of May that permanent peace now depends upon victory for the Allies in this war. President Lowell of Harvard expressed the developed opinion

of political thinkers when he said: "Another great war could scarcely avoid becoming a war of extermination. Civilization as we know it has reached a point where it must preclude war or perish by war, and war can be precluded only by a conquest of the world by a single power, or by an organization of many nations to prevent its recurrence." The American people are now fighting to bring into existence a society of nations bound together by the constructive purpose of world-pacification. Only by such a consummation can the war be really won.

But it is necessary to work for a worthy victory. There is now a tendency to seek enduring peace by the overwhelming military defeat and unconditional surrender of Germany. No matter how favorable the terms of peace which might be offered, they must be rejected. To take this attitude is to throw away a strong moral asset. Both President Wilson and Hon. A. J. Balfour have kept to the position that "if any representative of any belligerent power desires seriously to lay before us any proposals we are ready to listen to them." This is the attitude also of the British and French labor leaders. Since the allied aim is to organize an international society in which a well-behaved Germany would share with other nations the privileges as well as the responsibilities of world-citizenship, why attach to victory a purely military meaning which disregards the conciliatory nature of the allied purpose? While willing to fight until the political objects of the war are won yet the alternative should be kept open of ceasing to fight as soon as these objects can be secured without further bloodshed.

They who fight for permanent peace are subject to two dangers: (1) that their pacifism may relax their grip on the sword; (2) that the establishment of peace by war may result in an unworthy peace. There is no danger now of the first element. The

danger lies in the second. A democracy which is fighting for peace needs to retain even in the fury of war its faith in the principle of consent and its belief in the ultimate ability of moral ideals to overcome force. The sword may remove obstacles to the structure of good-will, but the structure itself must be reared by democratic workers toiling in a different spirit with different materials.

### **New Ideals for Peace**

The peace that is coming to the world as the conclusion of this war will not be a dynastic peace, nor a diplomats' peace, nor a secret peace, but a people's peace. Mr. Frederic C. Howe outlines the elements of such a peace in the May number of *Century*. All nations seem to be moving to the conclusion that an imperialistic peace is not a peace but a truce leading to new war. Hence the peace congress should be a body representative of civilization in which all nations great and small would be present. The day of nationalism is done. The new internationalism will toil for the advancement of the world. The settlement must be based on principles so just that all mankind will readily accept it. The elements of such a peace, in summary, are: (1) It must put an end to imperialism, which has been the moving cause of so many wars. (2) It must be a negotiated, not a dictated nor a punitive, peace. (3) Economic freedom must be assured to the interdependent nations of the world. (4) All nations and all peoples should be guaranteed the right to use the seas, the passageways to the seas, the land routes, like the Bagdad railway, free from any actual or potential menace from any power; all such arteries of commerce should be under international control. (5) It should provide for the fullest possible development of all peoples along the line of their racial genius. (6) Age-long wrongs of subject peoples must be corrected by some

kind of federation ideal which will give to small-subject peoples freedom and economic rights. (7) It will strive to prepare conditions so that small nations and weaker peoples shall be guaranteed protection by the united action of the world. Each of these scores of dependent peoples should be allowed to contribute its distinctive culture to the world. (8) The great powers will assume their responsibility to help the weak, dependent, and exploited peoples to a new development. This will apply especially to Syria, Mesopotamia, India, China, and similar territories. (9) It will open the way to free trade for the world and thus gradually eliminate boundary lines. (10) It will end the old policy of protecting investments with the national arms and establish international machinery to guarantee investments and to guard against harsh exploitation. (11) It will depend for its permanence upon its justice, upon the fact that it is a people's peace, upon the fact that it is backed by the democratic public opinion of the world.

There are only two alternatives: (1) a just peace based on freedom and equality of opportunity to all; and (2) an imperialistic peace followed by another struggle. We should choose the people's peace. The world will never be safe on any other terms.

### **Foundations of a Lasting Peace**

Another contribution to the immense literature that is growing up about the idea of world-federation and the problem of establishing permanent peace comes from Robert Goldsmith in the May number of the *Bookman*. While the great duty of the hour is to win the war, yet America should not neglect to prepare to meet the problems of peace settlement with intelligence and determination. We seem determined upon one thing, at least—that the coming peace must be permanent. To be permanent a peace must be: (1) general, so as to include all nations; (2) genuine,

founded upon justice and principles of public right, not a mere temporary truce based upon expediency; (3) generous, a peace without vengeance; (4) guaranteed, that is, the structure of peace must be founded upon international covenants, international courts, an international constabulary, and international co-operation. It must be underwritten by the people of the various countries—the workers and the women.

The international tribunals would hear all disputes among nations, a court of justice to decide cases for which laws exist, and a council of conciliation to compose difficulties by mutual compromise and concession. The powers would agree to exhaust every peaceable means of settlement before going to war. If a nation of the league violated this promise the other members of the league would bring all powers, diplomatic and economic, to bear to stop the aggressor. If that were not sufficient then all would unite their military and naval forces for the defense of the nation attacked.

An international constabulary of some kind will have to be formed to give sanction to the terms of the international covenant. But perhaps most important is the element of international co-operation. Privilege must be destroyed. It may be that international free trade will ultimately be the most potent factor in eliminating war.

The question of membership in the league must be left undecided. Some argue that the only possible league would be the English-speaking nations plus France. Others feel that it would be a mistake to leave Germany out. At any rate America must forsake her ancient policy of isolation and prepare to play an important rôle in the drama of history.

#### **The Aims of Labor**

The *Nation* for May 11 gives space to a discussion of the British labor movement as set forth by Arthur Henderson in his

recent book. The great human formula for the coming era of revolutionary change is equality. The aim of labor is to secure for every producer his share of the fruits of industry and to insure the most equitable distribution of the nation's wealth on the basis of the common ownership of land and capital and democratic control of all the activities of society. Yet labor does not set itself over against other classes, for real political democracy cannot be organized on the basis of class interest.

When social control of the economic bases has been secured labor will make four demands: (1) A series of national minima, designed to protect the people's standard of life, with guarantees as to wages, employment, leisure, and such things. (2) Democratic control of industry with the abolition of the wage system through common ownership of the means of production. (3) A revolution in finance, designed to bring about a system of taxation regulated not by the interests of the possessing and profiteering classes but by the claims of the professional and housekeeping classes whose interests are identical with those of the manual workers, a system intended to prevent the accumulation of great fortunes and to discourage individual extravagances. (4) The use of surplus wealth for the common good, through education, development of science and art, public provision for the sick and infirm, and similar measures. Such demands mean a revolutionary change in the social basis.

Mr. Henderson says: "By peaceable methods or by direct assault, society is going to be brought under democratic control. And the choice of method does not primarily rest with democracy: it lies rather with those classes who own the machinery of production and control the machinery of the state to decide whether necessary changes are to be peaceably introduced on the basis of willing co-operation or resisted to the last ditch."

The question confronting us therefore is not *whether* the economic and social organization shall be democratized, but *how* it shall be democratized. All the world's best brain power should be devoted to this problem that the adjustment may be made peaceably and not through force.

### **Education and Social Direction**

The wonderful efficiency of Germany in the war has caused many Americans to desire to add to American idealism the Prussian system of authoritative education. Professor John Dewey points out in the *Dial* of April 11 that this is pure stupidity—that the envied German habit of mind can only be secured at vast human cost. The obedient human mind, the passionate aspiration for subservience, cannot be secured by school discipline alone. All the resources of all the social institutions have to be continuously centered upon it.

There is no danger of such Prussianization, but the very suggestion shows that we are still far from realizing what is required to secure an effectively loyal democratic citizenship and a social unity and control on a democratic basis. The lament over the failure of American education to secure social integration and effective cohesion puts emphasis on the relations of personal authority and personal subjection or upon the regulative power of ingrained habits. "And anybody who hasn't put his soul to sleep with the apologetics of soporific idealism knows that at the present time the power which would fix the ends to which the masses would be habituated is the economic class which has a selfish interest in the exercise of control. To cater to this class by much talk of the importance of discipline, obedience, habituation, and by depreciation of initiative and creative thought as socially dangerous may be a quick path to favor." Unfortunately sociology has tended to reinforce this dangerous attitude by its emphasis on the doctrines of social control and discipline.

Our day does not require in education such an antithesis as that of social control and individual development. We need a heightened emotional appreciation of common interests and an understanding of social responsibilities. To set the individual over against the social is dangerous. The problem which democracy must solve is the construction of an education which will develop that kind of individuality which is intelligently alive to the common life and sensitively loyal to its common maintenance. "We want that type of education which will discover and form the kind of individual who is the intelligent carrier of a social democracy—social, indeed, but still a democracy."

### **Gassing the World's Mind**

In the *Outlook* for April 24, Mr. W. T. Ellis warns against what he calls "the three greatest menaces of the present hour." The first is the current cult of internationalism. It is a worse menace than Prussianism to the welfare of the world. "It hopes to make everybody a nobody and then suddenly to produce the perfect man and the perfect state." Russia is the tragic example of a nation destroyed by this cult. Internationalism meant there a vast disloyalty. It was a cloak for mental and moral laziness. It meant a repudiation of clear and tangible and undoubted obligations to the people of the country and to its national allies. One does not help to build up humanity by wrecking his own nation. "Passionate, pulsing, purposeful patriotism" is the most direct service a man can render to the human race as a whole.

The second menace is the prevalent hysteria about the destruction of human life. America has been a great sufferer from this malady. "Safety first" had almost become a national slogan. Pain and suffering were terrible to our national mind. This doctrine is poison. "Far better that three-fourths of the race should perish than that all should live in cowardice

and corruption of spirit. There are a thousand worse fates than being dead." Surely the very genius of the Christian religion is the spirit which offers life freely for the sake of love and loyalty and righteousness.

The third menace is the lowering of the ideal of personal chastity and sex morality. Russia and Germany are endangering our standards in this regard. Many a soldier is amazed at the European laxity. "While the vast majority of North American troops have remained uncontaminated, yet thousands of clean fellows have been harder hit than by German bullets on the fair fields of France." Our soldiers must keep their high reverence for woman's honor. The battle is for a new world-order. Spirit must win over the lower impulses. Real men will walk straight for the sake of home and womanhood. "Since we are about the grim business of entirely reconstructing civilization we are bound to take seriously our obligation to create and preserve a noble social system and one that will be safe for those first factors of democracy, our daughters and sons."

#### **The Place of the Minister in a Democracy**

The democratic movement is gaining a supremacy in politics, in industry, and in church institutions. When the general will of the people is given right of way in the world, what shall be the function of the minister? Bishop F. J. McConnell answers the question in the *Homiletic Review* for May. There have been many who think that the minister will be unnecessary in the new day, but if a man has a decisive message there will be a chance for him to state his truth, no matter what the social organization may be. If he is a "respectable expert" he will carry an expert's authority.

What should be the characteristics of preaching for a democratic age? (1) It will be directed toward the average mind. This does not mean giving the people

what they want. Ministers are prophets, not mere religious entertainers; but they will aim at influencing the main mass of the people. They will make sure of simplicity and clarity. (2) Stress will be put upon the human tests of religion. One can no longer say, "this is true because the Bible, the church, or the creed say so." It will not convince the people. The final test is just this—can religion be made compelling and useful? The test of the church is: Does it serve? Does it get hold of men, women, and children and lift them up to a burning passion for the betterment of everything human? This is the supreme test of every modern institution: what difference does it make to human lives? This too is the test of preaching. (3) The preacher should be the mouthpiece of his age—in the process of groping to a new vision he should be the one to gather the half-way conceptions into one great statement which the people will recognize as the thing they have been seeking. (4) He will keep before him the conception of Christian democracy. It is not a dead level of sameness, but a great body of which all men are members, yet with vastly different functions and coming into the Kingdom by many different ways. Religion is for all or it is for none. The chance for life is wide open. "Our trust is that, to the preaching of the wide-open Kingdom of heaven men in great multitudes will one day respond and that the church will be as wide as humanity itself." The ministry is a sacred calling: its function is to guide men who are losing their bearings in the seething sea of change, which is our modern world.

#### **A New Spiritual Approach to Democracy**

That the despotism of the Kaiser is not only political and economic, but religious, that German autocracy confronts a new and unique threat in the development of biblical higher criticism, and that liberal

German professors of divinity are virtually muzzled by heresy laws which make it impossible for the results of higher criticism to reach the people through the pulpits are some of the points brought out by Louis Wallis in *The Public*, of New York City, under the title "The Kaiser's Ecclesiastical Steam Roller." The articles present the struggle for democracy in a new light and are intended to promote the drive against the Kaiser.

The German Reformation, says the writer, was complicated with great social unrest. The common people rose in revolt against the junker aristocracy for grabbing the soil; and at a certain point in the movement, Martin Luther went over to the side of the junker landlords. The Lutheran theology and the German state church systems became a buttress to aristocracy, focusing the minds of the common people on "the other world," while the junkers consolidated their economic and political power over the masses. According to German orthodoxy the religion of the Bible was handed down from the clouds by a divine autocrat in the same way that the German kings handed down their decrees.

This theological dogmatism was first challenged by Professor Kant, of the Prussian University of Koenigsberg, an admirer of the American and French revolutions. Kant's "critical philosophy" alarmed the junkers and pietists. The reigning Hohenzollern, a predecessor of the present Kaiser, commanded the philosopher to cease referring to religion and the Bible in his lectures or he would lose his position. Later on the critical method became an active influence in German divinity schools, and Professor De Wette, the first full-fledged higher critic of the Bible, was thrown out of his chair in the University of Berlin by another Hohenzollern. Heresy laws were decreed which made it illegal for German pastors to give

the results of scholarship to their congregations.

Progressive biblical scholarship in Germany and other countries has been slowly preparing the way for popular understanding of the democracy of the Bible, the working of God through the social problem, and the revelation of God in the ordinary affairs of life. Critical scholars are the modern discoverers and interpreters of the Hebrew prophets as champions of the common people against the evils of concentrated wealth and power in the hands of the few. It is no wonder that the junkers and kaisers have not been enthusiastic for this kind of biblical interpretation.

The whole enterprise of modern biblical scholarship has gradually cleared the ground so that we can just now begin to see the mighty struggle against false gods in its true character as a bitter war on aristocracy and special privilege. This thought is taking root today in the religious world outside of Germany. The baalism of the Scriptures, against which the prophets fought, was the symbol of Hebrew junkerism; while the establishment of the worship of Jehovah was the first great step in the long process of making the world safe for democracy.

The state churches of Germany are managed on "orthodox" lines, precisely as if critical scholarship did not exist. But the religious life of Christendom is coming back to the logic of the Bible. Junkerism and orthodox dogmatism fail to crush the human spirit permanently. Today, more than ever, we are becoming conscious of God as Personal Power, immanent in the Cosmos, whose existence is identified with justice and righteousness, and who is conducting human history onward with reference to moral laws and eternal spiritual values. Religion is moving into a new epoch through the flames of world-war.